

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION:
ONE POSSIBLE APPROACH

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James William Dallas
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Faculty Committee

Van D. Rhodes

Mary Elizabeth Moore

March 31, 1980
Date

David Griffin
Dean

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ABSTRACT

This study concerns a project in community education sponsored by the Del Rosa United Methodist Church in San Bernardino, California, during the months of July and August in 1978 and 1979. Members of the Del Rosa congregation rejected a proposal that their church buildings be leased to a private school in 1977 because it would exacerbate existing racial divisions in the city and upset a court-pressured desegregation-integration program in the public schools. Meanwhile, a state tax limiting initiative, called Proposition 13, was approved by California voters in 1978. This caused the San Bernardino School Board to cut its budget and eliminate summer sessions. The church used that occasion to "fill the gap" and transform certain patterns of education in the community by establishing a Summer Enrichment Program that did not conflict with the public schools. Volunteers from its membership who were, for the most part, licensed public school teachers were used as instructors in the S.E.P.

This study shows that some of the reasons for the church's action, while not completely conscious at the time, were part of an historical process that has been going on for two hundred years. That process had to do with the Sunday school movement and its relationship to,

and interaction with, the church, education and progressive education. Furthermore, this paper demonstrates that this historical interaction provides a sound theological context for the church engaging in community education today. That theological context suggests that the church must function as an advocate and critic of cultural values and keep that dialectical role in balance if it is to remain loyal to its heritage and Lord.

PREFACE

During a period when public school enrollment has declined, the number of students in private schools has increased by 60 percent.¹ Social diagnosticians have given many reasons for this development. Among them have been "white flight" as a reaction to the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. the Board of Education*; overcrowding in public school classrooms accompanied by a reduction in academic standards; removal of religious references in the form of devotional prayers and Bible reading (due also to Supreme Court decisions of *Engle v. Vitale* in 1962 and *Abington School District v. Schempp* in 1963); and complications spurred by "bussing" as a means of the Court to enforce its previous desegregation mandates. Compounding these changes have been "tax revolts" diminishing the size of school budgets.

In a book that studies segregationist academies in the South, Terry Sanford, President of Duke University, asks why students and parents are more satisfied with the academies than their counterparts?

Race and religion are certainly important factors, but it is fair to assume that many people, presently straining the family income to the breaking point

¹Gil Sewall, et al., "Private-School Boom," News-week, August 13, 1979, p. 83.

to afford an academy education for their children, would be influenced by neither of these if they thought the kind of education and community involvement they want for their children was available in the public schools.²

How should the church react to this growing turmoil? More specifically, what is United Methodism's role in community education? This project attempts to explore these questions in the context of the Del Rosa United Methodist Church's actual response to the educational situation in San Bernardino, California in 1978 and 1979. However, before moving ahead with a more adequate statement of the intent of this study, a short summary of the background and circumstances that led to Del Rosa's program is needed.

On January 2, 1978, when the writer assumed responsibilities for pastoring the Del Rosa Church, the City's public school board was in the process of developing a voluntary program to racially integrate the elementary schools. This effort was precipitated by legal challenges charging that grades one through six were segregated and the court's subsequent decision to give the school district until February 1, 1979, to achieve a minimum 80-20 percent racial balance in all grammar schools. The court further stressed that if the school

²David Nevin and Robert E. Bills, The Schools that Fear Built--Segregationists' Academies in the South (Washington: Acropolis, 1976), pp. vi-vii.

board's voluntary attempts at integration were moving toward a 70-30 percent racial mix, then mandatory procedures would not be invoked.³

To gain a more complete perspective of the existing conditions upon the author's arrival it must be noted that during the decade of the 60s secondary school integration in San Bernardino, while handled rather creatively and without serious incident, did generate racial tensions. It might be recalled that this was a period in United States history of social unrest over the Viet Nam War, rising Black expectations and generalized institutional disenchantment. This "unrest" was carried into the high schools and stimulated fears as well as some physical violence. Even though physical encounters were minimal, there was suspicion and misunderstanding between the races. Needless to say, perceived fears on the part of residents over secondary school integration ran high.⁴ For these and other reasons, when the court raised the specter of mandatory bussing in 1977, fear, once again,

³San Bernardino's high schools and junior highs were exempt from these instructions because they have been "adequately" integrated for several years.

⁴This and other information on the history of San Bernardino's schools is based on the author's interviews with Dr. Gene Mueller, who was Superintendent from 1958-1970; Dr. Neil Roberts, a current Assistant Superintendent; fifteen teachers, including one principal, Mr. Richard Cotter; Black, white, Chicano and Oriental parents who had children in high school during the era under discussion.

touched the community. Private lower-division schools showed increases in enrollment and requests for more of these establishments were made by several parental groups.

One such request was presented to Del Rosa's trustees in October of 1977. Inasmuch as the congregation's former minister had left the pastorate in September of that year, and for three months the church was administered by several part-time lay volunteers, no single, informed view toward the proposed private school emerged. As a result, those who were in favor of it convinced the trustees of the financial benefits to be accrued from such a venture. In November of 1977, the trustees, along with the Administrative Board, accepted the private school proposal and drew up legal documents to implement their decision. The writer assumed his pastoral responsibilities two weeks before these documents were to be signed.

Immediately upon arrival, the author was aware of the potential problems such an undertaking could entail. On the one hand, there was the Church's commitment to public school integration. This had recently been reaffirmed by the 1977 Pacific and Southwest Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and was contained in a statement entitled, "Resolution # 7." In part it read:

Whereas: the school integration movement in the United States is the most promising reform effort in public education in this century;

Whereas: School integration began with the declaration of the Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, that segregated education is both unequal and unconstitutional;

Whereas: a number of communities of the Pacific and Southwest Conference are under court orders to desegregate;

Whereas: The United Methodist Church has historically affirmed public schools for quality education and for equal educational opportunity for all children;

Therefore, be it resolved:

That the Board of Church and Society call upon the Bishop and Cabinet to emphasize to all ministers and congregations that United Methodist properties may not be used in a way contrary to General Conference policy or to subvert constitutional rights by housing private schools set up to escape school integration. . . .⁵

Another concern on the part of the author was Methodism's record of support for public education and Del Rosa's potential departure from that support during a time when local public schools were under heavy pressure. For years The Methodist Church has viewed public education as a great democratizing factor in which all individuals share in an education that contributes to the full development of their capacities while providing a cohesive force in our pluralistic society.

At a meeting of school administrators, teachers, parents and church members, called by the writer to consider these ideas, there was a vigorous but orderly discussion! The administrators strongly supported "Resolution

⁵Pacific and Southwest Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Journal (Dallas: TM/UMR Productions, 1977), pp. 213-214.

#7" and pointed out that any movement of pupils into the private sector could easily undermine the existing voluntary bussing to integrate, thus compelling the courts to keep ethnic balances through involuntary bussing. The meeting was adjourned with another scheduled for "church members only" the following evening. After much debate at this second gathering, the writer made a motion that Del Rosa's members reject the private school proposal. There was some disagreement, but the motion carried overwhelmingly.

Shortly after these events took place there was an election in the State of California in which a tax limiting initiative called "Proposition 13" was approved. School Boards all over the state had to reevaluate their budgets. San Bernardino's Board took similar action and decided to handle its fiscal problems by eliminating summer school. Various leaders at Del Rosa met, at the author's request, to determine how the church would respond to this educational vacuum. It was then that a supplemental program of academic instruction for elementary school children was born.⁶ Initially, the group was not aware of all the historical forces involved in its decision. A need was perceived and the members of the group

⁶A more detailed description of Del Rosa's Summer Enrichment Program will be found in the appendix.

felt compelled, as Christians, to respond to it.

This study is an attempt to reflect on that response. It will be shown that some of the reasons for the Church's action, while not completely conscious at the time, were part of an historical process that has been going on for two hundred years. That process had to do with the Sunday school movement and its relationship to, and interaction with, the church, education and progressive education. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that this historical interaction provides a sound theological context for the church's engaging in community education today.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL ROLES OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

For the purposes of this study two streams of Protestant church history will be considered. These include the Sunday School Movement and the progressive religious education movement. It should be stated that progressive education was not born in the church but it had a powerful influence on it. Likewise, many of the values the church espoused influenced progressive educators who in turn sought to teach these values in various ways in public schools. Inasmuch as Del Rosa's Summer Enrichment Program was concerned with children from kindergarten through sixth grade this project will deal with youth in that age category.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

By and large historians agree that the impetus for the Sunday school movement came from Great Britain.¹ Around 1780, in Gloucester, England, Robert Raikes, a Church of England layman, started his first charity school

¹Marvin Taylor, Religious and Moral Education (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1965), p. 6.

for children of the poor, most of whom worked six days a week, and never had an opportunity to learn how to read or write. The upper classes in Gloucester generally held that education for the underprivileged was economically wasteful and socially destructive. More than one aristocrat had his eye on the civil strife in France and considered educating "the masses" a dangerous precedent. Outside of the benevolent activities of a few wealthy individuals the children of the poor remained uneducated. Robert Raikes stepped into that breach.

The popularity of the Sunday school grew for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the decrease in vandalism among idle youth on Sundays. However, the low income parents rightly perceived that as their children learned reading and writing, manners and "proper speaking," they were taking a giant step toward a better life. A few years after Raikes began his "charity school," he wrote of the pleasure he received in "discovering genius and innate good dispositions among this little multitude."² He told one reporter that the children in his classes "are not the ignorant creatures they were before. They are also become more tractable and obedient, and less

²Robert W. Lynn and Elliot Wright, The Big Little School--Sunday Child of American Protestantism (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 5.

quarrelsome and revengeful."³

Conditions in most English cities cried out for something like the Sunday school. Robert Lynn and Elliot Wright describe Gloucester as "a smallish city" preshadowing the Industrial Revolution, because it had at least one large pin-making shop.⁴ "Like most cities in Georgian England, [it] was a pit of misery, flooded by people from the countryside and exposing the children of the proletariat to constant abuse, both casual and entrenched."⁵

Robert Raikes was a journalist and publicist of considerable note and he used his skills and influence to highlight the need. As a result, others were attracted to the cause. William Fox, a London draper and pious Baptist, was particularly enthusiastic. He had long dreamed of systematic, universal, scriptural education for the poor. Whereas Raikes was primarily concerned with reading, writing, manners and cutting down on vandalism (with some scriptural learning thrown in), Fox put more emphasis on the Bible.

Accordingly, he formed a Society for the establishment of Sunday schools throughout the kingdom of Great Great Britain. The Society raised money to employ teachers and purchase needed books, including Bibles. Slowly but surely a miniature school system was developing

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵ Ibid.

throughout England. "The growth of these . . . charity schools was phenomenal in the 1780's and enrollment reached 250,000 by 1787."⁶ The educational needs of the common people were being met in an inexpensive way and the churches were shedding their apathy about religious education. Writing about this phase of the Sunday school, historians Lynn and Wright conclude that it was a time when "Labor was disciplined during the week and religion controlled on Sunday. Nobody's ox was gored, or so it seemed then."⁷ It was this pattern that was to be taken over by Protestant empire-building evangelicals in America.⁸

In 1785, William Elliott established a Sunday "class" in Accomack County in Virginia. From then on "the movement" spread rapidly but not without opposition.⁹ Church leaders and clergymen frowned on this new development, because religious and secular subjects were blended and, as we shall see, women were acquiring new authority. One congregation in Nashville, Tennessee, in the early 1820s, for example, posted a sign reading, "No desecration of the holy Sabbath, by teaching on the Sabbath in this Church."¹⁰ Yet, the Sunday school continued to grow

⁶Ibid., p. 7.

⁷Ibid., p. 9.

⁸See Martin Marty, Righteous Empire--The Protestant Experience in America (New York: Dial Press, 1970), pp. 75-76.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

and even flourish in the face of opposition.

Barely ten years after the Revolutionary War some prominent Philadelphians formed the First Day Society to teach children of indigent parents on a day which they thought was usually employed for the worse of purposes, namely, the depravity of morals and manners. Actually, this venture marked the beginning of a common school system for the youth of that city and was an early experiment in interfaith cooperation, for among its sponsors were a Roman Catholic layman, a Protestant-Episcopal Bishop, a member of the Universalist Church and a well known Jewish physician. In spite of this little foray into pluralism, the thrust of the Sunday school in the New World was toward particularism. Increasingly it espoused an evangelical concern to convert youth to Christianity. A critical commentator described the curriculum in the following manner: "It was made up of Bible, catechism, spelling books, readers, and dull prosy biographies of unnaturally good children, who all died young."¹¹

The extent to which the Sunday school prevailed is illustrated by its intercontinental evangelical ties stimulated by two women from New York, Isabella Graham and her daughter Joanne Bethune. Mrs. Graham kept in close

¹¹ Ibid.

touch with her friends in Scotland and received sermons, tracts and reports on revivals from abroad. She would then gather her friends to share the news and pray for guidance about their responsibilities in America. These gatherings were the genesis of an organization for sending missionaries to Indians and to settlers on the frontier, and for a "Society of the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children," which became the forerunner of the New York Orphan Asylum.¹² An interesting historical aside is that while the women Sunday school advocates of the early years "were not avowedly, or perhaps even self-consciously, plugging for their own empowerment or recognition . . . they were taking advantage of one of the few places in church life where women's initiative was possible."¹³ In England, for example, women had very restricted roles but they became increasingly involved in education when Hannah More, along with her sister, organized a string of learning centers in Somerset in which more than 20,000 children of the lower classes learned the habits of industry and piety. In America, Mrs. Bethune deliberately put the word "female" in the title of her organization.¹⁴ This threatened the established values of many local communities but the trend continued.

While Sunday schools were primarily urban

¹²Lynn and Wright, p. 11. ¹³Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁴Ibid.

institutions, at the dawn of the nineteenth century their promoters showed unusual adaptability and were willing to go anywhere for "the cause." In 1824, for instance, the American Sunday School Union was chartered and in 1830 it announced its intention to institute "a Sunday school in every destitute place where it is practicable throughout the Valley of the Mississippi."¹⁵ Once again the movement won acceptance as its representatives plied the "nooks and crannies" of small town life in rural America. In other words, "the Sunday school circuit rider" went where the people were, bringing much desired news from the outside world and stories to amuse and thrill a hard-working, isolated people. He also brought a supply of books, Bibles and religious tracts which formed much of the church-school curriculum. These "salesmen-missionaries" emphasized evangelical moral values, the ethic of production and aspiration and simple manners. Tracts were sold for a few cents apiece and leather covered Bibles would go for as much as fifteen dollars. In numerous small towns and villages the visiting "Sunday-school man" was viewed as the traveling library-bookstore and countless families felt it was their moral responsibility to equip their posterity with the best "literature" in print. Such activity illustrates that there was no neat separation between religious

¹⁵ Marty.

and general education.

Other formidable challenges besides the frontier confronted the expansion of the Sunday school, but its pragmatic enthusiasts continued to show their flexibility in meeting them. For instance, there was a growing lack of interest on the part of the poor in special schools on the first day of the week, because they felt they were singled out for ridicule by attending them. On the other hand, the rich began staying away precisely because the schools were intended for those of meager financial resources. Lyman Beecher explained how he and other stalwarts of the church prevented the Sunday school's demise by going to the "best" families in town and encouraging them to send their children to mingle with the poor. The persuasive clergyman won some supporters, dispatched his own brood and the plan worked.¹⁶ Beecher's activity gave the Sunday school a new impetus and reformed its role.

His interest in education was documented in A Plea for the West in which he states his belief that the religious and political destiny of America would be decided there. While commerce and manufacturing conferred a peculiar advantage on the East, he was convinced the West was destined to be the most powerful mold of liberty and free institutions. He was equally clear that the conflict

¹⁶Lynn and Wright, p. 14.

determining the nation's outcome would involve a "fight" between "institutions for the education of her sons, for the purposes of superstition, or evangelical light; of despotism, or liberty. . . ." ¹⁷ To win this civil and religious battle universal education and the teaching of moral culture by schools, colleges, seminaries, pastors and churches was required. Therefore, he concluded that prayers, charities, missionaries and Bibles were not enough! "There must be permanent powerful literary and moral institutions." ¹⁸ In other words, schools must be developed and a "great supply of teachers for the sons and daughters of the West must be raised up by the instrumentality of a learned and pious ministry." ¹⁹ At least one leader of the Second Great Awakening recognized that the proclamation of the gospel and the development of moral character and good citizenship necessitated universal education.

However, the conception of good citizenship produced by the Sunday school movement did not include equality for the races. To be sure, mixing the races was no great difficulty as long as the schools were mostly for

¹⁷ George C. Bedell, Religion in America (New York: Macmillan, 1975), p. 300. "Superstition" and "despotism" were marks of the Roman Catholic Church in Beecher's mind.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 301.

¹⁹ Ibid.

youngsters of the less "well-to-do." Yet, black children became troublesome and embarrassing to the affluent parents of white students. Barely a "handful" of integrated classrooms existed in the North and the culture's caste demarcations were faithfully observed.²⁰ Moreover, the growth of Sunday schools in the South was even slower, because they were identified and often equated with black education.²¹ After 1831 Southern whites had the memory of Nat Turner's revolt to remind them of what literacy and uncontrolled black religion could stir up. The prevailing image was that these extracurricular ecclesiastical activities were educating blacks so Baptists in the South were reluctant to enter the movement.²²

With America growing and changing the Sunday school became segregated in another area. The rise of public instruction left the church with less and less to teach. Reading, spelling and the other "secular" subjects were being delivered into the hands of non-Protestant and nonchurch people. In addition, there was mounting pressure on the Protestant ethos as it became increasingly separated from the larger world. Subjects which related to daily decisions were removed from the guidance of traditional evangelical values.²³ As an institution, born

²⁰Lynn and Wright, p. 15.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Marty.

in a barely literate society, the character of the Sunday school was altered, because the world around it was dramatically changing. A more knowledgeable society with mass public education left only an hour for private religious interests. More and more the church school became the vehicle for propagating the views of particular denominations. Yet, Sunday schools paved the way for common schools, transmitted aspects of the Christian tradition and united countless throngs into one loud and determined call for the permanent means of education. Summing up the movement in the early years, one authority on the subject writes:

Sunday schools were often seedbeds for both church and public education, sometimes being consciously designed as forerunners of more adequate public school systems. The Indiana Sabbath School Union enunciated precisely such a plan in 1827. "Let Sabbath Schools be established wherever it is practicable. . . . They will answer the double purpose of paving the way for common schools, and of serving as a substitute till they are generally formed. Parents and children, becoming sensible to the sweets and benefits of learning, will unite in one loud and determined call for the permanent means of education."²⁴

Some have suggested that these Sabbath classes grew into little cells that represented the most wasted moments in the week but the Sunday school's durability has been amazing and no more workable approach to Christian training has been introduced.²⁵ When compared to public instruction

²⁴Lynn and Wright, p. 29. ²⁵Ibid., p. xi.

the Sunday school is marginal for American society, still "it [has been] an important little school in the rearing of the nation. . . . [It] is the big little school of the United States."²⁶

The Sunday school movement, as we have seen, attempted to make up for the cultural deficiencies of its time and convert youth to Christianity. However, with new developments in the physical and social sciences, a growing number of persons believed that the utilization of this new knowledge was essential, not only to meet these deficiencies more adequately, but to preserve and communicate the Christian religion. These people formed a movement that was greatly influenced by progressive education.

THE PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MOVEMENT

In the twentieth century Christian educators could not ignore the changes and upheavals that confronted American society. Increased immigration, a mushrooming population, World Wars I and II, with the Great Depression sandwiched in between, all combined with a growing secularism to challenge moral, economic and spiritual values that had been generally accepted by the masses. Adding fuel to these changes was a growing acceptance of the

²⁶ Ibid.

historical-critical method for interpreting the Bible by numerous clergymen, who by this time became alienated from their congregations. That, in turn, precipitated a "literalist-liberal" controversy which has continued, in various forms, to the present day.

Generally, the literalists emphasize that the Bible is the unerring Word of God, so that learning it by rote or in catechetical fashion, is considered the best approach. By this method, it is believed, an individual can relate personally to God through Jesus Christ in an act of surrender to his Lordship and be "saved" from the evils of this world and the torments of the next. That conviction is to be proclaimed in a way that stimulates a crisis decision within the person to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Constant emphasis is placed, as it had been throughout the early stages of the Sunday school movement, on being converted or "born again."

The liberals rejected that approach and viewed it as authoritarian indoctrination that was subversive to the best in Christianity. John H. Vincent, a noted religious educator who flourished from 1860 to 1900, observed that "the Sunday school was strong in the heart and weak at the head," because it too often espoused the conservative formula.²⁷ The liberals readily agree that one needs to

²⁷ Arlo Ayers Brown, A History of Religious

relate directly and personally to God through Jesus Christ in an experience of surrender, reconciliation, dedication and filial love; but this relationship, they argue, is inadequate if restricted to the notion of being "born again" in a once and for all fashion. A proper relation to God requires religious nurture and the creative democratic sharing of experience. Liberals found support for this position, which had been enunciated by Horace Bushnell in the middle of the nineteenth century, in the new experimental philosophies of John Dewey and the "progressives" associated with him. Some of the salient features of Dewey's model for education include: (1) Each student was afforded more freedom for individual development than he had in traditional schools. (2) A reluctance to have rigid timetables for classes. (3) Emphasis was placed on interest and less on discipline when defined as something externally imposed upon the learner. (4) Larger units of study were sought so each child could work at his or her own pace. (5) A stress on education doing more for and to the student rather than simply transmitting information. (6) A recognition of the student's differing maturation process when compared to fellow students and adults. (7) A combination of classroom learning with community

Education in Recent Times (New York: Abingdon Press, 1923), p. 83.

involvement.

Dewey was the premier educational thinker in America and, as we can see, he reacted strongly against the formal disciplinary approach so prevalent in the classroom. "He saw education as being both a moral and social process related to the larger community in which the child's total experience occurs."²⁸

Following Dewey's leadership, liberal Christians and public educators began to identify three basic approaches to education that admittedly overlapped but were nevertheless distinct. One conceived of education as instruction and its intent was to transmit to the student an organized body of knowledge. Another approach viewed education as training. Its primary task was to prepare the young to take their place effectively in adult society. Although it was to be for the young, its values were predetermined by adult needs, adult standards and adult decisions. A third vision, Dewey's own, saw education as a democratic process.

William Clayton Bower, a leading innovator in religious education at the University of Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s, referred to Dewey's position as "an invitation into a creative personal and social experience."²⁹

²⁸Taylor, p. 27.

²⁹William Clayton Bower, Character Through Creative Experience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

Utilizing the insights of those who developed progressive education, Bower argues that the objectives of Christian education ought to be the achievement of personality and an effective social life. "From this point of view," Bower says, "education is oriented toward persons as persons, both in their individual and in their group life."³⁰ Moreover, he maintains that the question to be asked at the conclusion of any educative process is not, "What has the child learned?" or, "What traits, ideals and skills has he laid up as a fund against the demands of adult living that is not yet real to him?" Rather the question to be asked is, "What is this growing person becoming in his own right?" Bower lists other critical questions to be asked by those who commit themselves to Christian education.

Does education enable the growing person to be more discriminating and critical regarding the facts of his experience? Is he more social in his attitudes toward his fellows? Is he more appreciative of the elements of aesthetic beauty in the world about him because its values are real to him? Is he acquiring the capacity to form ethical judgments in the light of the far reaching consequences of his acts upon his own personality and upon the social group in the light of the highest values in personal and social living? Does he assume an increasing spiritual attitude toward the world? Is he forming a set of values and purposes of his own that he has criticized, evaluated, organized, and accepted as the

1930), p. 11.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 11-12.

³¹Ibid., p. 12.

dominant ends of his quest for the more abundant life?³²

We can see that for Bower progressive religious education is initiation into creative personal and social experiences and not a matter of rebirth as understood by the "fundamentalists." For Bower, conversion is a matter of progressive discovery whereby one's personality reaches its highest level, enabling an individual to make significant contributions to his society.

Nevertheless, in spite of this conviction, he is quick to point out that overstressing the "new" approach might be dangerous if it becomes too "child centered," that is, if the content is wholly determined by the interests of the child. While believing undue emphasis on the past makes education "conservative, backward looking, assimilative, and authoritative," he opts for what he considers a sounder approach: "To think of human life as a continuing process, moving from a past into an open, undetermined, and as yet, uncreated future."³³ In short, Bower partially affirms the first two traditional approaches to education described above but felt quite strongly that they would fall into "radical error" unless they were supplemented by the third or progressive option.³⁴

³²Ibid., p. 13.

³³Ibid., p. 14.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 14 ff.

Bower was not the only Christian educator influenced by this new method. George Albert Coe, perhaps the most influential figure in Protestant religious education in the first half of the twentieth century, developed his progressive theory of religious education during the second decade of the twentieth century, emphasizing that the central fact of the educative process is a growing Christian experience in and through the pupil's social interactions.³⁵ Coe is intent on bridging the gap between knowing and doing, or Christian doctrine and Christian experience. He boldly points to the futility and self-deception of the prevalent "transmissive" type of religious instruction and challenges the churches to undertake a progressive and creative teaching program as the one way toward revitalizing the church and reviving religion in American life.³⁶

Such progressive theories which Bower and Coe, among others, helped develop had only a marginal effect on the Sunday schools of Protestantism until 1922 when the International Council of Religious Education appointed a committee on the new "International Curriculum of Religious

³⁵George Albert Coe, A Social Theory of Religious Education (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), pp. 80-82.

³⁶George Albert Coe, What Is Christian Education? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929).

Education." None other than William C. Bower was asked to chair the group and he did so with distinction. Along with other members who shared his thinking, he gave additional visibility to progressive educational theory. This organization also summoned into consultation representative leaders from public schools. That was impetus enough for the educational boards of Protestant churches to open the way for a thoroughly fresh approach to the concept of Protestant nurture.

While multiple denominations and various points of view made church leaders reluctant to adopt a unified curriculum, nevertheless, lesson guidelines were established and a liberalizing influence upon Protestant thinking was definitely set in motion. Where Sunday school lessons had been based on Biblical selections and materials chosen by individual teachers to transmit to a general audience, now age differences and real life experiences were woven into graded lessons that were carefully coordinated from denominational headquarters. Where the aim used to be everybody studying the same scriptural passage every week, now it was maturation in the context of the Christian faith as a way of living. Describing the ideal Sunday school in 1956, Harry C. Munro said, "It must be an arrangement for providing situations which are rich in their possibilities and incentives for experiences in the direction

of Christlikeness."³⁷ Moreover, it must be a place where such experiencing can be concentrated, where favorable conditions for it can be provided. The situations should be those that are normal and real for the learners. They need to be as representative of the real life of these learners as possible; in fact, they must be real life.³⁸ Summing up the "perfect" method of teaching church school Munro echoed progressive thinking: "Preparing children for some future responsibility should be subordinated to enabling religion to function effectively now in the life that those of each group are living."³⁹

One can readily see how Munro is dependent upon the progressive theories of education that blossomed during the first quarter of this century. By the 1940s, the Sunday school class was not supposed to be a place where adults imposed their ideas, convictions, or predetermined goals upon children. Rather, it was to be a fellowship of growing persons. Various stages of maturity were viewed as opportunities for enriched sharing. The teacher was not one who had "arrived" or was in possession of all the answers; to the contrary, he was also a learner and searcher for new experiences of truth. His challenge was to be

³⁷ Harry C. Munro, Protestant Nurture (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1956), p. 53.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 60.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

a guide as well as an enabler on the journey toward a richer life.⁴⁰

As the calendar turned to 1950 these ideas were accepted more and more by secular as well as ecclesiastical educators. Main line denominational seminaries continued to teach their charges the progressive approach through the early 1960s. However, there were storm clouds on the seemingly peaceful horizon. Technological and political changes affecting the world not only impacted American politics but Yankee institutions as well. The church and its Sunday school were not immune as neo-orthodox theologians challenged progressive religious education theories. The growing power of Communist dictatorships, as typified by the U.S.S.R. and mainland China, heightened global tensions and spurred an unprecedented international arms race. With space exploration, United Nations "police actions" and wars of liberation in emerging countries, many thinkers described the modern world as being gripped in a "triple revolution" comprised of armament development, the quest for human rights and cybernetics. While generating enormous geopolitical pressures, some of these conditions created more jobs. Americans were living in "the age of anxiety," yet also in "the age of affluence." In turn, higher education became more

⁴⁰ Ibid.

technically oriented and "job" centered and, at the same time, also more available to the masses through vast networks of newly created state colleges and universities. All of these events stimulated family mobility, recreational diversions and previously unimaginable opportunities for obtaining material things. The homogeneity of suburban life was "cracking" and the religious "boom" of the 1950s and early 1960s was climaxing in a "thud." Secularism and insecurity seemed to be on the increase and liberal clergymen strained to speak a relevant, albeit controversial, word to people caught in the throes of a "triple revolution." As main line churches suffered huge membership losses without fully knowing the causes, Sunday school enrollment and attendance waned even beyond the percentages of a slumping birthrate.

While these trends increased in liberal churches, conservative congregations and Sunday schools grew! Progressive education was vigorously attacked from "fundamentalist" bastions as being "people centered" and not "God centered." Charging that it was "too permissive" and and "socialistic," clarion calls were sounded to "get back to the Bible." Some "fundamentalists" even demanded a reaffirmation of the "free enterprise system," which they claim is taught in the Bible. Various publishers, attuned to these upheavals, began to supply local pastors with samplings of their so-called "scriptural-centered" lesson

materials, and encouraged them to substitute these for their denominational literature. Even public instruction was touched with this emphasis as many school districts were pressured to teach a literal account of creation as found in Genesis, along with evolutionary theory. Many parents and professional teachers insisted that education stress technical knowledge to prepare enough engineers and scientists to "compete with the Russians" in "the age of Sputnik."⁴¹ Progressive education was clearly on the defensive in the public sector and in the religious one as well.

In fairness to the conservatives, it should be noted that many of them saw their cherished pattern of life slipping away. They had prospered under the American system of "free enterprise" and felt that only strong, even authoritarian, teaching methods could counteract the challenges presented by dictatorial ideologies. What they failed to teach was that there are innumerable pockets of poverty and racism in the United States and that economic concentrations of power sustained a type of systemic injustice that demanded to be redressed. In their belief that specific biblical passages could help them solve these

⁴¹For further insight as to how America came to this point see Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny--A History of Modern American Reform (New York: Vintage, 1956).

problems, literalists failed to comprehend the best in the Social Gospel movement which sought to attack the evil in institutional relationships inherited from past generations through conventional politics, nonviolent resistance, massive boycotts and other mostly legal means. Furthermore, many of their advocates overlooked or ignored what Paul Tillich called the Protestant Principle--that the Cross of Jesus Christ stands in judgment on every economic system, political party, individual, country, church and ideology because no one of these is ultimate. While religious "fundamentalists" did not have a monopoly on being moralistic ideologists, during the 1950s and 1960s they, along with some old-line conservatives, tended to overidentify Christianity with their understanding of the "American Way of Life."⁴²

It is easy, then, to see why their Sunday school literature during this time span reflected a "back to education by the instruction and training" approach. What was happening was a reemphasis on the need to transmit an organized body of knowledge to the learner and give him a set of predetermined adult standards and values by which to live. The memorization of Bible verses and stories was once again the "in thing" to do. More than one Sunday

⁴²See Erling Jorstad, The Politics of Doomsday--Fundamentalists of the Far Right (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

school teacher required rote learning for her First Day "cherubs," who recited what they learned to "beaming" parents during the regular worship hour. Insecure and biblically uninformed church school teachers, who came of age in the "technological-secular" era, felt more comfortable with these methods because they required less preparation than progressive lessons. Moreover, they provided reasonably clear-cut "handles" to assist in the teaching process.

Even those who supported progressive religious education recognized they had failed to pass on necessary biblical information to their students. To assist Sunday school teachers the liberal churches established ongoing programs of laboratory schools using local and outside leaders with instructional skills; experimented with youth participating in altered adult worship services; held seminars to interpret new educational materials; hired professional Sunday school teachers; reinstituted the Vacation Bible School; offered more opportunities for training professional directors of religious education at their seminaries; and attempted to increase home-family involvement with Sunday school literature. Yet, there was no wholesale retreat from the progressive thrust. Quite the contrary, there was a reassertion that we live in a secular society that needs to be informed by the biblical tradition if maturation in Christian living is to be distinctive.

Up to this point, we have seen how developments in education outside the church have shaped Sunday school programs and methods; now we shall see how the church's influence upon a democratic society lured public education into a concern for values and character development.

CHARACTER AND VALUE EDUCATION:
THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH UPON PUBLIC EDUCATION

Throughout the Depression and the Second World War dormant historical forces were surfacing that led many individuals and educational organizations to turn their attention once again to the role of public schools in character formation. Marvin Taylor discusses these efforts and offers three representative samples of how educators tried to meet what they considered a crisis in value awareness and commitment.

The first had to do with a study prepared by the John Dewey Society, a group of scholarly educators. In 1944, they concluded, in their Seventh Yearbook, that values such as moral insight, integrity of thought and equal regard for human personality were not inborn but acquired and their acquisition should be a major purpose of public instruction. Like their predecessors, they maintained that these qualities could be determined and taught on the basis of human reason and experience without necessary recourse to religious authority.

Nevertheless, the schools could and should share this teaching responsibility with religious groups because the values they defined had religious dimensions. The thrust, though, was secular and basically the province of public instruction. "This yearbook served the important function of calling educators back again to the task which had dominated their thinking twenty years earlier but which had more recently been neglected."⁴³

The second sample described by Taylor was a position paper made public in 1947 by the American Council on Education's Committee on Religion and Education. This task force worked diligently on the relationship between religion and education and drew up proposals for the instruction of moral and spiritual values in the public classroom. Noting, like others, that some persons found secularism a way of life, they concluded that it had gone too far and was generally unrepresentative of Americans. In a response to the John Dewey Society yearbook, this committee suggested that the complete elimination of religion from community education was extreme and not legally required. Furthermore, it was educationally unwise and implied a duality about religion and the rest of life. This, in turn, led to the conclusion that religious

⁴³Taylor, p. 30.

education, at best, was marginal and unimportant. The committee was quick to announce that they were against sectarian religious instruction and the notion that pluralistic Americans could arrive at some shared core of theological belief; "Still," they insisted, "moral and spiritual values alone did not represent the full content of religion. Religion assumes a personal identification with the ultimate source of values and faith in their validity."⁴⁴ Therefore, moral and spiritual value programs, like those suggested by the John Dewey Society, should be encouraged, but by themselves were inadequate. "Something more is needed if the public school is to measure up to its challenge."⁴⁵ That "something more" was to be the objective study of religious values characteristic of various faiths. In this way, it was reasoned, the full treatment of religion could be naturally woven in at whatever points it genuinely occurred in music, social studies, literature, the fine arts and other subjects in the curriculum. "By ignoring religion," they stressed, "the schools had been denying students the opportunity to learn about it."⁴⁶ The committee felt that altering this trend could help overcome religious illiteracy and make possible an intelligent understanding of the relationship religion has had to culture. It might also bring about a positive appreciation

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

for one's Faith and provide a basis upon which informed responses to its claims might be made.⁴⁷

Predictably, the opposition to these recommendations was strong and came from various sources. Strict separationists and those committed to a secular philosophy of life claimed it was illegal. Others stated it opened the door to sectarian indoctrination masked under the guise of "objective study." Liberal oriented churchmen were enthusiastic and saw it as an answer to their main objection to the public schools. Yet, conservative clergy condemned it as an unsatisfactory compromise with the secular world because it was not particularistic enough in its instruction.

The third illustration Taylor offers as an attempt at character training revolves around a study made by the National Education Association in 1951 and reported in a document entitled Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools. It was the result of three years of research into ways of improving the teaching of moral and spiritual values. In essence, it supported the contention of the American Council on Education regarding teaching religious material wherever it was appropriate to the subject matter. Yet, it went further in that direction by isolating ten important qualities for learning: human personality, moral

⁴⁷ Ibid.

responsibility, institutions as men's servants, common consent, devotion to truth, respect for excellence, moral quality, brotherhood, the pursuit of happiness and spiritual enrichment.⁴⁸ Various reasons for accepting these values were advanced, none of which violated church-state separation sanctions. The report concluded by discussing nine ways educational institutions could promote the learning of these ideals.

Needless to say, community reaction was similar to that afforded the American Council statement! "A midsummer 1951 issue of the journal, Religious Education [listed] fifteen prominent persons in education, including representatives from the major faith groups, [who] were asked to evaluate the report."⁴⁹ Their responses ranged from complete endorsement to veiled and even open criticism. Especially criticized was the recommendation to teach religious content.

These three examples and reaction to them illustrate the desire and difficulty of teaching character education in a country that is at once, pluralistic, secular and possessing of a broad religious heritage. Combined with Constitutional guarantees of freedom of worship and the multiplicity of denominations, religious educators continue to find it difficult to consciously relate

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

spiritual values through the public schools.

While frustration has been the hallmark of character education programs, they have been enthusiastically attempted in Kentucky and California with varying results but strong indications that they are feasible and workable.⁵⁰ By and large, these pilot projects kept theological and sectarian teaching away from the classroom and sought to delineate and discover moral questions and traits that are present in everyone's living experience. This followed William Bower's notion of progressive education in that it did not define moral qualities as abstract generalized values. No qualities, therefore, needed to be injected into the school from the outside by a church or any other group, for they were inherent in all of the relations and activities of the school and a part of the ordinary teaching-learning situation. The job of the school was defined as, "helping the pupil identify the value components in his experiences and learn from the choices which he is called upon to make."⁵¹ The teacher's role was to provide guidance and counsel in the discovery and development of those situations in the total school program which were value laden. No extra courses were taught in the Kentucky and California projects but the value emphasis intentionally permeated the entire life of

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

the institution. Since no pupil could be isolated from nonschool experiences, the program required active understanding and cooperation from all community agencies that influenced him.⁵²

Taylor writes about other problems and successes with these pilot programs, like the lack of teachers competent for the task of value instruction and the subsequent developing of additional opportunities for training in that area; but he ends his discussion with a worthy summary of the efforts and motivations of those who believe in character education and are trying to find ways to introduce it into the public classroom.

As countless commentators have suggested, the most crucial task facing the United States may well be a restoration of a proper balance between technological and scientific achievements on the one hand and cultural and moral values on the other. And the responsibility falls squarely on the schools, as well as other institutions whose claims are only voluntary. This is the major challenge which confronts the public schools today. Its legality appears certain, and its achievement will not be easy. But the school, which stands as the single most authentic interpreter of our heritage and culture, must measure up to the challenge.⁵³

In conclusion, the motivation for Robert Raikes to create a charity school on Sundays in Gloucester, England,

⁵² Bower chaired the advisory committee for Kentucky's project and completely described its philosophy in William Clayton Bower, Moral and Spiritual Values in Education (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1952).

⁵³ Taylor, p. 37.

in 1780 was to teach the children of the poor how to read and write. Doubtless, he wanted children to be able to read the Bible, because he was a dedicated Christian; yet, he could see how youngsters of the lower classes were forced to work six days a week and had little or no opportunity to learn. He also made the point that if the youth of Gloucester did not learn reading, manners, and "proper speaking" they could never take a step toward a better life. Most of the town's folk agreed and the Sunday School grew.

Teaching religion, with the so-called "secular subjects," was, in Raike's era, less complicated than it is in contemporary America. For one thing, England had no sharp division between church and state. For another, communities there were more homogeneous and Christianity was widely regarded as the true Faith which offered salvation in this world and the next. Moreover, the Bible was one of the few books that everyone had and was the chief resource for story-telling.

None of these things prevails in contemporary America. In addition, for those of us in the liberal church whose training and history call us to the task of teaching religion and values in community education, we find ourselves opposed by conservatives and separatists. One type of conservative opposition centers around their conviction that the purpose of the church's educational

policies should not be that of enriching the students' cultural experiences. Instead, it should impart a pietistic interpretation of the Bible that relates to his personal salvation. On the other hand, separatists see any activity of the church in community education as an invasion that violates the principles of separation of church and state. The decision at Del Rosa to develop a Summer Enrichment Program (S.E.P.) sided neither with the conservatives nor with the separatists. Rather, its origins, as this historical survey indicates, lie in the Sunday school movement begun by Raikes, the progressive educational theories espoused by Dewey and others and the concern for character and value development.

During the Summers of 1978 and 1979 Del Rosa's school met the needs of many low income children by providing them supplementary instruction that the city's schools had abandoned. Moreover, the methods used in the classroom were informed by progressive education; and, in the final analysis, the classes were not designed to convert the students to Christianity as such. Instead, they were planned for the purpose of enriching the fulness of their character with the assumption that the full development of their character included a critical, as well as a positive, look at the relation of religion to culture. We shall now turn our attention to this last point, namely, the biblical-theological foundations for this twofold

concern to enrich the culture while simultaneously distancing
outselves from it.

CHAPTER II

A TYPOLOGICAL DEPICTION OF
DEL ROSA'S EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION

We have demonstrated in Chapter I that in order to transform society the church has sometimes supported dominant cultural values, while at other times it has had to be critical of them. A clarification of Del Rosa's S.E.P. and its role in the community can be discovered by comparing its pattern with the useful typologies established by H. Richard Niebuhr.¹ He categorizes the principal ways Christians have understood their relation between faith and life, on the one hand, and the culture of the world, on the other.

The first type he calls "Christ Against Culture" which is exemplified by the clear-cut New Testament demand to reject all the non-Christian world. That injunction is found in the First Letter of John. For example, we read, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him" (2:15). Continuing on, we discover that the writer of I John is convinced that the entire pagan society which surrounds the faithful, is doomed, "but he who does the

¹H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).

will of God abides for ever" (2:16-17). Therefore, the Christian is to live in the fellowship of the church and reject this whole doomed culture.

That approach, while dominating Christian thought and action during some periods of its history, has recurred in contemporary times. "The early Friends, for instance, protested, not only against war, but also against worldly deference for rank, customary clothing and church ritual."² Persons in these movements see themselves primarily in the role of critics and always face several unanswerable questions. First, "how can any one completely divorce himself from culture?" All humans grow up in some form of it; therefore certain aspects of culture are always carried in the heart. Second, "how can a Christian group or individual claim total independence from the larger society?" No one can exist and shed all responsibility for society's condition. Third, "there are some characteristics that differentiate man from lower forms of life like speech. Speech involves signs and symbols that grow out of one's culture. How can any person avoid them?" Even those who take vows of silence must think in human symbols of speech!

The separatist style, while valuable in warning Christians that no state or nation is ever synonymous with

²L. Harold DeWolf, Responsible Freedom--Guidelines for Christian Action (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 87.

Christ and that God must always bid for our loyalty, is, as we shall see, a limited understanding of God's activity in the world. Moreover, it is not the tradition that informed Del Rosa in its project, or, as it will be shown, Methodism throughout its history.

Niebuhr labels his second classification "The Christ of Culture." This observation makes the point that some theologians have seen Christ-like activity in various cultures of the world where the church was nonexistent and the name of Jesus unknown. Thus John speaks of "the light" which was incarnate in Jesus as "the true light that enlightens every man" (John 1:9).³ The importance of seeking Christ within culture should not be diminished. It is, after all, a reminder to the followers of Jesus that the principal place of Christian service is in the world. Jesus championed the cause of the poor, treated outcasts humanely, talked with "sinners" and suffered death on a cross. Furthermore, the world is loved by God and he works in it by bringing order to chaos, justice to injustice, and love to hate. However, the advocates of this motif tend to view culture without critical distinctions and run the risk of idolizing it. Their Christian witness tends to be so immersed in the "ways of the world" that it makes little prophetic impact on society.

³Also see Acts 14:16-17; 17:26-28.

The biblical-theological discussion in this study will allude to these dangers if the church abandons its role as critic and simply fulfills its function as advocate. Moreover, we can see that "The Christ of Culture" pattern did not inform Del Rosa's decision to create the S.E.P. That project was certainly an affirmation of many cultural values but its content and timing were based on Christian principles that were critical of some of these values.

A third category is referred to by Niebuhr as "Christ above Culture." He suggests that this is a synthesis where Christ is placed above culture, yet in close relation to it. Devotees of this style recognize the enormous gulf between Christ and the world today but they do not indiscriminately scorn it by withdrawing into a monastery. To the contrary, they feel that the world has much to commend it! For example, one can read the philosophical writings of thinkers who predated Jesus and discover ideas that help understand God. Nonetheless, there are some characteristics of God that can only be known through his revelation in Jesus. Representatives of "Christ above Culture" believe their approach provides a convincing appeal for faith in the world while at the same time allowing the world to be penetrated deeply by unique Christian ideas and purposes.

The problem with this model is the great difficulty

it presents in trying to balance the role of advocate and critic. The synthesis of Christ being above culture but related to it often fails to relate effectively and we are left with two bodies of teaching and two forms of life. Furthermore, since categories of thought are readily adopted from the world, Christian concepts of God and life tend to be distorted. We will see in our biblical-theological reflections that Jesus related positively to his culture but his proclamation of the Kingdom was not a simple synthesis between God's ways and society's. On the contrary, it was a sharp contrast! Del Rosa found itself affirming yet decisively rejecting the private school in order to support public school integration. This role as critic, while not the major thrust of Del Rosa's program, is sufficient to demonstrate that the "Christ above Culture" motif was not its source of direction.

Niebuhr's fourth designation is "Christ and Culture in Paradox." The paradoxes of Law and grace, obedience and Christian freedom illustrate this pattern. Its representatives believe that the proper law for economic and political relations, for instance, is justice, not love! Therefore, attempts by Christians to express love in public policy result in self-delusion and the strengthening of unjust and violent forces. Still, the love ethic of Christ must be held in tension with social justice, tempering court decisions with mercy and restraining nationalism.

The author feels "comfortably close" to this model and finds much to recommend it. For example, it is realistic about the limitations of love in the social order and therefore realistic in its understanding of the nature of man. It is a powerful antidote to the kind of "Christian do-goodism" which established Prohibition as the Law of the land and ultimately stimulated more problems than it solved.

However, there are dangers in the "paradoxical" style, as some of the actions of Martin Luther, who affirmed it, indicate. Luther felt Christians should live by faith, with generous, forgiving love, and eager helpfulness.⁴ But in his polemic Against the Robbing and Murdering Hords of Peasants he calls upon the civil authority for ruthless suppression and says, "Here there is no time for sleeping; no place for patience and mercy. It is the time of the sword, not the day of grace."⁵

Another danger of the "Christ and Culture in Paradox" model is that its supporters seem to lack a sufficiently hopeful view of culture. In spite of the consummated reign of God in the world through Jesus Christ they tend to emphasize what we cannot hope to achieve, which tells us too little about what we can and ought to do. That attitude lends itself to defending the status quo and

⁴DeWolf, p. 91.

⁵Ibid.

tends to cut the nerve of passion for reform.

The biblical-theological references that will be analyzed in this study show a similar "discomfort" with the "paradoxical" motif, for while these references will imply that we are surrounded by the possibility of great evil, they will affirm that we are also surrounded by One whose love defines our possibilities! That love does not push rudely into the world nor act by suspending other agencies; nonetheless, it does act by the steady urging of harmony spreading through creation by "overcoming" the world. Jesus' ministry fit this pattern for we shall see that he announced God's present activity in the world and demonstrated again and again that evil is redeemable in the "now." This more positive (not optimistic) attitude best describes Del Rosa's action and the one which most adequately represents John Wesley and the traditions of Methodism. Its characteristics are described by Niebuhr in a fifth motif to which we now turn for consideration.

Typological model number five is called "Christ the Transformer of Culture." Those who embrace it are as aware of the tremendous difference between the realm of grace and the powers of this world as those who subscribe to "Christ and Culture in Paradox." In addition, they also refuse to separate themselves from the world. However, they affirm a more hopeful attitude toward it than do those who support the "paradoxical" model. This hopefulness is

what makes them distinctive for they insist that God not only created the world and human beings, but remains active in it. In spite of sin, the eternal God constantly works in us and around us, making it possible to turn (i.e., creatively transform) the course of history in the direction of his purpose. The New Testament widely attests to this theme in various passages, the most prominent of which is in the Fourth Gospel. "God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). This hope in God leads one to be an advocate of the value of creation even though one must be critical of its "fallenness."

John Wesley subscribed to that hopeful view of the world and the possibilities of its being turned to God. An appropriate footnote to Del Rosa's project is Niebuhr's reference to Wesley as a representative of "Christ the Transformer of Culture"! The world, for Wesley, was fallen and corrupt. Nevertheless, God's grace restores enough of his divine image to it that men have an opportunity to respond to the gospel with faith. Furthermore, Christ's grace, while being sufficient to effect the justification of man in his sin, also enables the converted person to "go on to perfection" in love.

Certainly this is not absolute perfection of deed because man is finite. Yet, it is perfection of intent or the perfection of a benevolent purpose to serve God by

serving other persons.⁶ Wesley is sure that the work of God is social. "Holy solitaires," he says, "is a phrase no more consistent with the Gospel than holy adulterers. The Gospel of Christ knows no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness."⁷ This conviction led Wesley to bring converts together in religious societies and class meetings for mutual assistance of an economic, educational and spiritual nature. It also stirred him into actively supporting the abolition of slavery and the correcting of other social injustice.⁸ Wesley, true to Niebuhr's typology, proclaimed Christ as a transformer of culture by both advocating the divine element preserved in the world, while at the same time judging those aspects of "fallenness" in need of reversal.

The convictions of Del Rosa's members to establish a S.E.P. to meet social needs were similar to Wesley's. Moreover, these tenets, like Wesley's, meet the criteria described by Niebuhr as "Christ the Transformer of Culture." By attempting to meet learning needs and transform patterns of educational opportunity in San Bernardino the author's parishioners found themselves in the role of both advocate and critic. To further explicate this two-fold response,

⁶ Philip S. Watson, The Message of the Wesleys (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 69-152; 195-216.

⁷ DeWolf, p. 93.

⁸ Ibid.

we will develop the biblical-theological foundations for the claim that the Christian gospel itself requires a dialectical involvement in the world.

THE CHURCH AS ADVOCATE

In the role as advocate of dominant cultural values the Del Rosa Church sought both to preserve the "best" of the courses eliminated by San Bernardino's abandonment of its summer school session and also to enrich them by offering new subjects normally given little emphasis. By reflecting on the Church's action to preserve and enrich, we will see that the pattern of events in San Bernardino has its precursor not only in the Sunday school movement that culminated in the use of progressive education in the liberal churches, but also in the kerygmatic activity of the early church.

Members of a task force created to determine course offerings for Del Rosa's project began their work by re-searching what subjects the public schools were going to offer had they not eliminated their regular summer classes. In addition, they interviewed school administrators to ascertain what areas would be deemphasized for financial reasons during the forthcoming fall and spring semesters. Their motivation, at this point, was to salvage certain subjects that were deemed fundamentally important for youth to function creatively in our society. On the basis of

this preliminary investigation, members of the task force recommended that foundational courses in reading, writing and arithmetic be set up. Inasmuch as music appreciation, health education, crafts, drama and coeducational team sports were going to be downplayed in the new year, classes in these areas were also recommended. The congregation's Administrative Board approved these suggestions and urged their implementation during the summer months of July and August.

There was nothing unique about that action. It was an attempt to preserve dominant cultural values in a way that was characteristic of much in the Sunday school movement. As we have seen, that movement sponsored education on the frontier making it possible for countless numbers of children to acquire basic knowledge. By using the Bible as a text for teaching reading, moral and spiritual values were absorbed even by those who were not church members. This kept alive a civil religion that was a cohesive factor in the development of American society. These and other actions on the part of the Sunday school laid the ground work for universal public education on a heretofore unprecedented level which ultimately transformed the history of America.

However, salvaging important cultural values was not restricted in Christian life to the work of the Sunday

school! The Lord that it proclaimed also was concerned to preserve the values of his rich Jewish heritage. For example, the Gospel of Matthew attributes to him a desire to retain the whole of that tradition!

Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. (Matthew 5:17)

Here we observe in imperative form the necessity to retain that which was deemed worthy in the culture and to integrate it into the Christian economy. In fact, the church retained the Old Testament as part of its canon. Moreover, early Christianity rescued the prophetic thrust of Israel which had been eclipsed by the apocalyptic mentality. By establishing a supplementary program for learning, Del Roas's parishioners were retaining and transmitting educational values deemed important in America's culture and in that, they were imitating a pattern that has its roots in the Bible.

Yet, in developing courses that were given little or no attention in the public schools, Del Rosa, in its role as advocate of dominant cultural values, found itself affirming another aspect of the church's tradition, namely, the enrichment of values. Included among the new classes were the following: nutrition, music appreciation, drama and coeducational team sports. These courses had large

enrollments and were well received.

The classes on nutrition provided information on the limitations of "junk" food and the actual damage it causes to one's overall well being. Students cooked and prepared their own food. Teachers were self-consciously using progressive educational techniques in that the youth established part of the agenda and were learning by doing. The same approach was followed in the sections on music appreciation and drama. In music appreciation, for instance, the teachers had the children listen to various types of music and led them in discussions on its meaning. As part of the enriching experience the youth were given three musical dramas to examine and asked to select one to perform before their parents on the final day of school. Preparation included helping their instructors make the costumes.

Coeducational team sports was another success! The intent of this offering was to stimulate the students' appreciation for male-female cooperation. A variety of physical tests were given to the youngsters prior to taking the course to determine their coordination levels for properly balancing the teams. Variations on basketball, softball and soccer were played to the delight of all the participants--save one! Within a few days the spirit of cooperation across sexual lines was much in evidence.

In these enriching activities, Del Rosa was again

following an historical pattern evidenced in the Sunday school movement. Perhaps the most important illustration of this is the way in which it provided an opportunity for low-income youth to get an education. But another example, in addition to creating more openings for women to use their leadership abilities, was the way in which the Sunday school societies spurred the growth of humanitarian movements like the YMCA. Established to provide a "home away from home" for rural boys who found their way to the cities, the "Y" had many representatives of Protestant churches on its boards of directors. Libraries, game rooms, athletic facilities, lectures, room, board, as well as other "wholesome" activities were offered to young men for "protection" against the "negative influences" of urban life. Gospel meetings and Sunday school were regularly scheduled events!⁹ By providing more possibilities to learn as well as advocating humanitarian activities and universal education, the Sunday school enhanced culture and added new dimensions to an understanding of the self.

Once again we can see how those leading the S.E.P. and the Sunday school movement were informed by the ministry of Jesus. For instance, Jesus intensified the vision of God's Kingdom by proclaiming its present activity. The

⁹George C. Bedel, Religion in America (New York: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 302-303.

religious majority of his day viewed the Kingdom as an exclusively future event when God would cataclysmically enter history and redeem Israel. Jesus enriched this understanding by proclaiming that God was already active in history redeeming evil. When challenged to give signs indicating the time God would intervene and favor the Israelites with his action, Jesus responded by saying, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21). By the use of the symbol "Kingdom of God" Jesus not only preserved an image of God's activity that was so important in Israel's mythology, but also added a novel insight: The Kingdom is already here.

The power of the Kingdom's present activity is also illustrated in the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Here we learn of a Jewish man who became wealthy collecting taxes for Rome from his fellow Jews in the region of Jericho. The scripture refers to him as "a sinner" (Luke 19:7b). One day, Jesus was passing through Jericho and Zacchaeus was eager to see him. Being short in stature, the "sinner" climbed a tree in order to get a glimpse of the Christ. When Jesus walked near the tree where Zacchaeus was perched he looked up and asked him if he could be his house guest that evening. The crowd was astonished that Jesus would associate so closely with a

"sinner." Yet, Zacchaeus became a changed man because of his encounter with the Christ. To underscore God's power to redeem evil in the present, Luke records how the former "outcast" made restitution for frauds of which he was self-confessedly guilty and gave half of his goods to the poor. This is but another instance of the way in which Jesus enriched his listener's understanding of the Kingdom, for its activity is not just future or restricted to the nation of Israel, but its power is operable in the "now," healing people and making them whole.

Paul's description of the "gifts of the Spirit" in I Corinthians 12-14 is yet another illustration of refining cherished values. His conception of the Spirit was derived from Judaism. The Old Testament teaches us that the term "Spirit" is used to refer to an attribute of man, a physical phenomenon like the "wind" or the invasive power of God in human life.¹⁰ It is this latter usage that Paul applied to God's activity in Jesus. His coming signaled the dawning of the Messianic Age and the church, Paul felt, bore the marks of that age. These marks were gifts of God's Spirit which came through Jesus. They included a variety of qualities like wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, prophecy and tongues. However, the

¹⁰W. D. Davies, Invitation to the New Testament (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 358.

Spirit's most excellent manifestation is agapé, the unmerited, overflowing, persistent, creative good will of God toward man and of man toward man "in Christ." The Apostle's classic description of agapé's characteristics in I Corinthians 13:4-13, while rooted in his Jewish background, expanded that heritage by widening the notion of love. As a matter of fact, that is what was new in Christianity, an expanded understanding of love! We see by these examples how the thrust of the kerygmatic activity of the early church both preserved and enriched its Jewish heritage.

A modern theological defense for viewing God as the One who preserves values while luring people into new riches of experience is made by John B. Cobb, Jr.¹¹ He argues that there is something in the nature of things which makes improvement possible though not inevitable. The power sustaining order and being appears to be dynamic and directional. Empirical studies have concluded that over the very long run there has been an evolutionary process in both physical reality and human development from simple to more complex structures and relationships, from qualitative limitation to qualitative richness and variety,

¹¹John B. Cobb, Jr., God and the World (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 42-66. Cobb describes the "lure into new riches of experience" as the call forward "by the One who calls."

from the inert to the more dynamic, from comparative isolation to a more social existence.¹² In other words, there has been an emergence of life, of mind and of spirit.¹³ This suggests one of the ways God is active in the world, creatively advancing it.

According to Cobb, the reason God is able to act in that fashion is because he uniquely encompasses every occasion and is the repository of all reality. That being the case, he is the conserver of values. However, God is the enricher of values as well, for as the repository of all reality he contains the data for all further development in the future. God enriches by passing back to the world a sense of what perfected actuality might have been and not just the stubborn facts of history. It is God's nature, then, to offer back to the world everything that is of value from the past for the formation of the future.¹⁴

An analysis of John Dewey's thought reveals that he, too, recognized the reality of the "lure" as a prod to intensifying experience. He refers to it as the "power of an ideal" and speaks of the active relationship between

¹²Harvey Seifert, Reality and Ecstasy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 65.

¹³Ibid. Also see John B. Cobb, Jr., The Structure of Christian Existence (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 135-137.

¹⁴Robert B. Mellert, What Is Process Theology? (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), p. 48.

ideal and actual."¹⁵ He states that this might be termed "God." Dewey's notion of God differs from Cobb's in that he ultimately sees ideals as projections by man without any independent origin. Dewey, however, was profoundly drawn by ideals to which he gave deep commitment.

Del Rosa's decision to become an advocate of community education by preserving and enriching curriculum offerings ordinarily found in the public schools fits into an historical pattern of events traceable to biblical-theological foundations. There is a danger, however, in reducing the role of the church or the gospel to one advocate. Illustrations of that danger abound. Theologically, one way of viewing the "Culture-Protestantism"¹⁶ of the late nineteenth century led Albrecht Ritchel is to see it as an extreme attempt to preserve certain cultural ideals. In Germany, this movement culminated in the sanctioning of aristocratic military values of the middle class.¹⁷ In America, during the mid-1800s, Lyman Beecher fervently advocated universal education as an antidote "to superstition and despotism," but "superstition" and "despotism" in Beecher's mind was synonymous with the Roman

¹⁵ John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 51.

¹⁶ That is, interpreting Christ as a hero of manifold culture.

¹⁷ Niebuhr, pp. 91-115.

Catholic Church! Today, popular "fundamentalist" religious education in the United States tends to sanctify established patterns of the "American Way of Life" in the name of conserving tradition, while its "liberal" counterpart tends to revere progress which often degenerates into "faddism" because the values of tradition are neglected. The question is, how may one find depth in the tradition to provide guidelines for a transforming vision? This requires the church to be critic as well as advocate.

THE CHURCH AS CRITIC

When Del Rosa withdrew its offer to house a private school it functioned as critic of some values affirmed by church and society. In that capacity it stood in the tradition of the Sunday school movement and progressive education in the liberal church. Moreover, it fulfilled a role with biblical-theological precedent. A brief review of the events surrounding Del Rosa's action as critic is now in order.

Within a week of the author's assumption of responsibilities in his new parish he learned about the private school proposal and immediately sought an interview with its many sponsors to discuss his concerns and their objectives. Those wanting the school said they were motivated by high, as well as "practical" ideals. For example, innovations in teaching methods were planned with the specific

intention to improve children's reading skills. Another particularly fine feature to assist single and/or "working" parents would be the establishing of a child care center at the same location between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Special math courses were envisioned for those with exceptional ability and the school was to be nondenominational and open to all who could afford it regardless of race or creed. Practically speaking, taxes incurred by the church because of its "new occupant" would be borne by the "new occupant." Besides financial gains, private school promoters pointed to other advantages for the church. These included increased visibility in the community because more people would be on the premises and the satisfaction of participating in a "ministry" improving the quality of education for local youth.

While affirming these aims the theological background of the writer compelled him to raise questions about their ultimate results in the context of the proposed setting. Would we, in the church, for instance, upset the court pressured "voluntary" integration program that was underway in the city's schools by providing a place of learning not subject to the same pressures? Would a private school at this time in San Bernardino perpetuate and exacerbate existent racial divisions? Would Del Rosa be abandoning Methodism's traditional support for public instruction as a great democratizing factor in the American

dream? Moreover, would our United Methodist Church be in conflict with its national body's condemnation of racial segregation by providing a de-facto channel for those who wanted to escape school integration? Would members of the congregation become lax in their financial support of the church by overly depending on receipts from the private school to supplement the budget? The author concluded that the answer to all the above questions was "yes" and the majority of his parishioners agreed!

Once again, in reflecting on the decision to question certain values for the sake of transforming them, we can see that the writer's congregation was upholding an historical function of the church--that of critic. Indeed, Protestant Christianity had its beginning because of the church's capacity to be self-critical, and so did the Sunday school. Robert Raikes lived in England at a time when some prominent ministers held, with community leaders, that education for the lower socioeconomic classes was wasteful and destructive. Raikes thought this unjust on the basis of his understanding of the gospel so he urged that the poor be given a chance to learn reading and writing as a stepping-stone to a fuller life. Likewise, when Sunday school societies welcomed the leadership of women, they were unconsciously challenging the roles to which adult females had been assigned.

Horace Bushnell, a forerunner of the progressive

religious education movement, published his most famous work in 1847 entitled, Christian Nurture, in which he criticized the prevailing revivalistic mode of violent emotional conversion. Because man was depraved, Bushnell reasoned, conversion was necessary but it may be a process of Christian nurture because most children in America grew up as Christians and never knew themselves as being otherwise.¹⁸ At the time, the argument put forth by this New England Congregational minister was convincing and influential. By exercising the church's historic function as critic, this liberal Protestant spokesman unlocked depths in the Christian tradition and provided guidelines for a transforming vision of how people can experience and proclaim the Faith.

In a similar way, notable religious interpreters of John Dewey's educational theories, like George Albert Coe, raised their voices in protest over authoritarian teaching styles in most Sunday schools. They were convinced that traditional lessons were out of touch with recent social currents and failed to solve genuine problems.¹⁹ Their criticism had an effect and was responsible for the following changes in many a Sunday school

¹⁸J. Donald Butler, Religious Education (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 98-99.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 111.

curriculum: (1) acceptance of the problem-solving approach in which material to be taught began with a problem the children faced, then pointed to an answer in the Bible;²⁰ (2) greater usage of arts and crafts, particularly in the Vacation Church School; (3) utilization of the unit and the project in building curriculum as well as in planning methods.

By judging accepted teaching patterns in the Sunday school as being "out of step" with current knowledge, Coe and other progressives enabled Christianity to be intellectually respectable and a viable religious option for twentieth century man. To a great extent their methods worked as freeing agents to release creative energies for new possibilities of humaneness.

Finding worth and meaning in the tradition and utilizing it to provide guidelines for a transforming vision is typified by the ministry of Jesus, for he was not only an advocate of his heritage but a critic of it as well. Biblical scholar James A. Sanders makes the two-fold activity of Jesus clear in his study of the interpretation of Isaiah 61.²¹ When Jesus uses this passage to

²⁰Ibid., p. 112. Butler points out that this was a somewhat corrupt version of Dewey; nevertheless, Dewey and the progressives were the source.

²¹James A. Sanders, "From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4" in Jacob Nuesner (ed.) Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults (Leiden: Brill, 1975), I, 97.

describe his mission (Luke 4:18-19), and therefore advocates Isaiah's prophecy, he reverses contemporary assumptions, found in the Qumran community, that the "acceptable year of the Lord" would favor a chosen few. A major conviction of the Essenes was that they were the "in group" and "the captives" who were going to be released in the imminent future. Yet, Jesus' citation of the gracious acts of Elijah and Elisha toward the Sidonian widow (Luke 4:26) and the Syrian leper (Luke 4:27) indicates that he did not subscribe to the Essene belief that at the end of time they will be the recipient of blessings and outsiders the recipients of curses! Sanders argues that Jesus clearly shows that Isaiah's words meaning poor, captive, blind, and oppressed did not apply exclusively to any in-group but, on the contrary, to those to whom God wishes them to apply. God sent Elijah and Elisha to outsiders, the Sidonian widow and the Syrian leper. We can see, therefore, that Jesus found images in his heritage to transform the bigoted views of his contemporaries.

The stress on inverting favoritism is central to those verses in which Jesus is described as performing miracles, (e.g., "recovering of sight to the blind"). He is aware of what the townsfolk are thinking, that the healings should benefit them rather than their competitors in the next village. "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb," Jesus says. "Physician, heal yourself [i.e.,

heal your own relatives and neighbors first]; what we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here also in your own country" (Luke 4:23). Jesus then describes the consequences to any prophet who is true to his calling of inverting the favored-nation assumption of his listeners. "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country" (Luke 4:24).

Sanders claims that the Lukan wording of this proverb, using "acceptable" rather than "not without honor" as in Matthew and Mark, is true to the original setting because it reiterates the last word of the Isaiah citation.

No prophet, that is, no true prophet of the Elijah, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah type is dektos (acceptable) by his own countrymen precisely because his message always must bear in it a divine challenge to Israel's covenantal self-understanding in any generation. A true prophet must cast a light of scrutiny upon his own people from the very source of authority on which they rely for their identity, existence and self-understanding.²²

Inversion, then, is fundamental to genuine prophecy. If a prophet confirms the superiority feelings of his audience he stands in the tradition of the false prophets.²³

This theme of "eschatological reversal" is one of the best attested themes of the message of Jesus. It proclaims the Kingdom as eschatological reversal of the

²²Ibid., p. 99.

²³Robert Jewett, Jesus Against the Rapture--Seven Unexpected Prophecies (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), p. 59.

present and so demands judgment upon the present.²⁴ Norman Perrin underscores that point and deals with two of Jesus' most radical statements in Matthew where Jesus counsels turning the other cheek, giving your cloak as well as your coat and going the second mile (5:39b-41).

Many Christians have sincerely wondered about the meaning of these sayings and some have agonized over their application to everyday life. Few take them literally and most water them down just enough to make them possible of fulfillment. By doing that the faithful are able to view these teachings as harsh demands or hard challenges. Perrin argues that interpreting them that way is irrelevant to an historical understanding of the message of Jesus. In the context of Christ's proclamation about the meaning of God's Kingdom, these statements are not superhuman demands nor do they call us to radical obedience. However, they challenge us to radical questioning about the way we are living and the paths we are following and into judgment upon those ways and paths. In other words, they cause us to ask the following questions: "Must we continue doing what we are doing?" or "Is it not possible, because of God's goodness, to receive courage to try other avenues?"²⁵ These radical questions, when taken

²⁴Norman Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 52.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 51-52.

seriously, can work "as freeing agents to release creative energies for new possibilities of humaneness."

John Cobb's theological vision affirms this view by suggesting that belief in God gives grounds for supporting the prophetic "No!" which is an equivalent to Jesus' understanding of "eschatological reversal." In addition to retaining values and luring people into new riches of experience, God creatively transforms the world by functioning as "critic." Cobb turns to Jesus to illustrate his point. Jesus is fully human, he argues, but unique, decisive and authoritative for us today because his humanity is a more perfect humanity than has ever existed. This is true by reason of his complete response to God's aims for him.²⁶ One of the chief characteristics of that response, as our biblical exegesis has shown, is Jesus calling into question the virtue of the virtuous and reversing accepted standards for self-evaluation. By this action, he was open to creative transformation and those who are responsive to him are open to participating in the same possibility.

Creative transformation is integral to redemption in the theory of Cobb. Redemption means that man need not slavishly move through life from moment to moment

²⁶ John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin, Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 103.

simply creating new syntheses from worldly data in pursuit of worldly satisfaction. To the contrary, man is freed to respond to the divine immanence, within him and within the world, thus constantly striving, occasion by occasion, to maximize a realization of that divinity as best he can, within the historical and environmental limitations placed upon him.²⁷ We maximize our relationship to divinity by conforming in some measure to Jesus. To be sure we cannot go back to Jesus by simply repeating his beliefs. There is a great distance between his experience and ours. Therefore, what we can do is go forward in a way that somehow corresponds for our day to the meaning of his message for the people of his time.²⁸

In a similar vein, the process philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, suggests that Jesus' teaching, just because of its impracticality, creates restlessness with every existing system. Jesus confronts us by raising radical questions about patterns we take for granted, and if we take those questions with utmost seriousness, we open ourselves to the possibility of being creatively altered. Cobb, who acknowledges his indebtedness to Whitehead's thought, calls Jesus "the Disturber" and claims that a genuine encounter with him creates dissatisfaction with a status quo which was previously regarded as natural

²⁷Mellert, p. 86.

²⁸Cobb and Griffin.

or inevitable and to which we felt we must be resigned.²⁹ Indeed, the story of Jesus reminds us that whenever we expose our established and received convictions to ever-new criticism and evidence we are exposing ourselves to God or the call forward.³⁰ "Hence the divine presence is experienced as other, sometimes recognized as gracious, often felt as judge."³¹

The decision by Del Rosa to supplement public school education, and thereby to act as a transformer of culture, included a pattern of advocacy and critic that is defensible from its biblical-theological heritage. To involve oneself in the world is always a precarious adventure, for too often one stresses one side of the dialectic at the expense of the other. This study demonstrates that if the church abandons either side of the dialectic, it would be in violation of its heritage and disloyal to its Lord who lures us into the future.

²⁹John B. Cobb, Jr., Liberal Christianity at the Crossroads (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 34.

³⁰Cobb, God and the World, p. 47.

³¹Cobb and Griffin, p. 105.

APPENDIX

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

When the Council on Ministries of the Del Rosa United Methodist Church approved the creation of the S.E.P. in 1978 for children in grades one through six, the writer formed an executive committee composed of his parishioners to commence the project. Chairpersons for the following areas were selected: registrar, dean of curriculum, treasurer, secretary, publicity, purchasing and teacher recruitment. The registrar was given authority to preside over all executive committee meetings.

Twenty-four adults and eight senior high students were recruited to teach. Twenty-two of the instructors were members of the congregation and the others enlisted were from nearby churches. All these classroom leaders, save three, held California State Credentials for teaching public school. Eight were retired for three or more years while the remaining thirteen were presently employed by the San Bernardino School District. The three nonlicensed instructors had previous experience as youth directors.

The S.E.P. in 1978 and 1979 lasted one month and began the week after the Fourth of July. It ran through the first week in August. The reasoning behind this schedule was that children needed a vacation at the close of regular school and during August when many families traditionally take their holidays.

S.E.P. classes met five days a week, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12:05 p.m.¹ Students attended three courses each day that were divided into a Monday-Wednesday-Friday and Tuesday-Thursday arrangement. Each class lasted fifty minutes and approximately seven minutes were allotted to the youngsters for going from first to second period. A twenty-five minute "snack-recess" was taken each morning at the end of the second session.

The budget for 1978 totaled \$1,000.00 and \$1,500.00 in 1979. The first year tuition was \$12.50 per child and \$10.00 for other youngsters from the same family. This increased to \$15.00 for the first child and \$12.00 for the second during the 1979 semester. The United Methodist Women of Del Rosa provided eight scholarships for anyone who needed the funds to attend the school. The registrar made this determination in consultation with the writer. A limited number of children paid half the tuition because their parents assisted in some way in the day to day activities of the program. It was also understood that no one would be denied admission if he/she was genuinely unable to meet enrollment costs. Each year, due to careful planning, the budget was underspent by \$150.00 and the extra money was given to the church for general

¹See Class Schedule in Table I.

maintenance!

Publicity for the S.E.P. included the following measures: a paid advertisement of moderate size was taken out in the local newspaper and run in three consecutive issues; announcements were given to area radio stations that had "public bulletin boards" as part of their regular programming; large signs were constructed and strategically placed on the church's grounds; posters, lettered with information about the S.E.P., were distributed to markets and other business establishments; "flyers" were mailed to area churches and given to Del Rosa's members to hand to neighbors who might be interested; announcements were made by the writer from the pulpit and written in the church newsletter; the religion editor of the city's newspaper was contacted by the author, who convinced him to do a feature article on the school.

In addition to purchasing paper, pencils, food and items for craft classes, a record player and movie projector were borrowed from a neighboring church. Teachers used some of their own books for instruction after sharing the contents with members of the executive committee for their approval. Public school administrators, being very supportive of Del Rosa's project, allowed textbooks from school district stocks to be used inasmuch as the S.E.P. was open to all races and creeds and offered no overt religious instruction.

Enrollment commenced a week before the opening session and was done at the church office with volunteer assistant registrars. These assistants "handled" the telephones for two evenings to accommodate parents who were working outside the home and could not enroll their children during "working hours." In 1978 there were 68 students and 102 in 1979. The ethnic breakdown the first year was as follows: 10 blacks, 14 orientals, 5 hispanics and 39 whites. In 1979 there were 13 blacks, 16 orientals, 8 hispanics and 65 whites.

Although it is difficult to accurately determine the economic status of the students' families, one can generalize with some precision. During both years approximately 20 percent of the children came from homes that would be considered middle class in the city of San Bernardino. Probably the majority of the youngsters' families were in the lower-middle and upper-lower classes. The author estimates this to be 65 percent of the enrollment. The remaining youth (15 percent) came from financially disadvantaged homes, with two children having parents "on welfare."

An important suggestion for church groups planning educational projects is to provide adequate janitorial service! In Del Rosa's case, two high school youth desiring summer employment were hired to assist the regular custodian. Another suggestion worthy of consideration is

the inclusion of voluntary courses on religion in the curriculum. The need for religious instruction is highlighted in the latter part of Chapter I in this study. Also, a constant reminder of the church's dual responsibility of critic and advocate is always in order when deciding whether or not to go ahead with any church-sponsored community education program.

ILLUSTRATIONS: TABLE I AND TWO LETTERS

TABLE I
CLASS SCHEDULE

	Room	Subject	Grade	
			Day I	Day II
P E R I O D 1	1	Reading	1	4
	F	Nutrition	2	5
	2	Math	3	6
	3	Music/Drama	4	1
	FH	Arts/Crafts	5	2
	Y	Sports	6	3

P E R I O D 2	1	Reading	6	3
	F	Nutrition	1	4
	2	Math	2	5
	3	Music/Drama	3	6
	FH	Arts/Crafts	4	1
	Y	Sports	5	2

P E R I O D 3	1	Reading	5	2
	F	Nutrition	6	3
	2	Math	1	4
	3	Music/Drama	2	5
	FH	Arts/Crafts	3	6
	Y	Sports	4	1



Del Rosa ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OFFICE OF PRINCIPAL

3395 N. Mountain Avenue
San Bernardino, California 92404
Phone: 88-64656

April 6, 1978

Reverend Galal Gough
First United Methodist Church
4845 Brockton Avenue
Riverside, California 92506

Dear Sir:

I was asked to attend the board meeting of the Del Rosa Methodist Church on April 4 to review the school district integration plan and the effect that a private school housed at Del Rosa United Methodist might have.

Although alternative programs and innovative instructional approaches are often described as the basis for establishing non-public schools, we know that at this point in time such a move would have a negative bearing on the plans for our desegregation emphasis in Del Rosa School. We are maintaining a delicate balance of children from the various racial groups which now qualifies us as a racially balanced school. Any flow of children (even a few) to the private sector would have a definite negative effect on our plans.

We understand that the school is not a church school, but rather a private school, using the rented facilities of the church. Even so - the end result would be the same and the churches' resolution on school integration (June 1977) would be violated.

I request that you encourage the minister, Reverend Dallas, to take a firm position on this matter and support his contention that the rental of church rooms for a private school at this particular time in the history of the community would be a direct contradiction of the church's position.

Please accept my thanks for your help and understanding in this matter.

Sincerely,

RICHARD COTTER
Principal, Del Rosa School

cc: Dr. Neal Roberts
Rev. James Dallas

RC/jk

San Bernardino City Unified School District



April 7, 1978

Reverend Galac Gough
First United Methodist Church
4845 Brockton
Riverside, CA 92406

Dear Reverend Gough:

Tuesday, April 4, I was invited by Reverend James Dallas to attend a meeting of the Board of the Del Rosa United Methodist Church regarding the leasing of church owned facilities to private organizations for the purpose of starting a private school. Reverend Dallas asked that I give the Board some background on the desegregation efforts of the San Bernardino City Unified School District and to outline our concerns as public school officials to the proposed establishment of the private school.

As I indicated to the group, a private school in this location at the present time would, in my opinion, increase the opportunities for the more affluent parents (particularly in the northeast section of our community) to avoid participation in desegregation efforts. Even though the school would not be sponsored by the church, it would still be perceived by the community as being offered and operated under the aegis of the church.

As you know, the desegregation/integration process is an extremely difficult one and it would seem to be important for religious groups to stand firmly behind and support the kind of position the United Methodist Church has taken on desegregation.

I am extremely impressed with Reverend Dallas. He is, in my opinion, providing responsible, competent leadership in our community as evidenced by his position in this matter and the way he is handling it with his congregation. He is to be commended.

Sincerely,

E. Neal Roberts

E. NEAL ROBERTS
Assistant to the Superintendent
Program Management

ENR:nar

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